foreign satellites that are co-ordinated over India, for setting up of international gateways for Internet.

6. Opening of International Long Distance pre-poned to April, 2002 from 2004.

Free telephone to employees of Gujarat Telephone Nigam

†204. DR. A.K. PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the States in which Government have implemented free telephone facility for the employees working in the telephone department;

(b) whether the said facility is in force for the employees of Gujarat Telephone Nigam also;

(c) if so, the number of employees benefited through the said facility till July, 2001;

(d) the number of employees deprived of this facility;

(e) by when they are likely to get the benefit of this scheme; and

(f) the expenditure to be incurred by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Concessional Telephone Facility to regular serving telecom employees of DoT/ BSNL/MTNL and erstwhile DTS/DTO has been extended in all the States and Union Territories in India.

(b) Yes, Sir. The facility is in force for the employees of Gujarat Telecom Circle of BSNL also.

(c) 16985 employees.

(d) and (e) 1235 employees have not been provided due to non-receipt of applications and areas being Technically Non-Feasible. They will be provided on receipt of application and areas becoming technically feasible.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(f) The facility entails non-recurring financial implication of not more than Rs. 800/- per employee on account of installation charge and recurring financial implications of not more than Rs. 3000/- per annum per employee on account of rental for telephone.

Rules framed for Extra Departmental Agents

205. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the approximate number of Extra Departmental Agents working in various post offices in the country, circle-wise;

(b) whether Government have received any Memorandum from them to provide them better service condition and wages;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the steps taken to consider their demands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) The information is given in the enclosed statement. (*See* below)

(b) Demands relating to allowance and other conditions of employment of ED Agents were part of the Charter of demands submitted by the Postal Federations in November, 2000.

(c) and (d) Extra Departmental Agents now called Gramin Dak Sevaks are employed for a period of duty ranging from 2 to 5 hours a day. They do not form part of the regular civil services and their terms and conditions of employment are governed by separate set of rules, earlier named P&T ED Agents (Conduct & Service) Rules, 1964, and now amended as Gramin Dak Sevaks (Conduct & Employment) Rules, 2001, incorporating the changed nomenclature of ED As and also be specific characteristics of the ED system. In the context of Fifth Central Pay Commission for regular Central Government Employees, the Government had set up a one-man committee headed by Justice Charanjit Talwar to examine the wage structure and other conditions of employment of ED Agents. After